

though I may not object, just a few days ago, I filed H. Res. 945, the Lebanon Humanitarian Relief Act with a number of cosponsors. And I raise the question to the distinguished gentleman of whether or not what we are doing today will also include a cessation of targeting infrastructure of noncombatants, and whether or not it will also establish or give the Secretary of State the ability to, if you will, negotiate safe corridors for evacuees to be able to be evacuated.

This is a crucial time in the history of our Nation, and as well in the issues dealing with the Mideast. And I am concerned that as we consider funding for the evacuation of innocent Lebanese citizens, as has been noted, several incidents have occurred where evacuees unfortunately suffered injury or death trying to escape, therefore we should instruct the Secretary of State to negotiate with the United Nations and the participants in this conflict safe corridors for the Lebanese evacuees and also a cessation of firing on noncombat structures such as airports, hospitals, schools and otherwise.

I yield to the gentleman to know if there are any instructions in this UC with respect to any of those items.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, no, there are not. It would merely ensure that the State Department could use the existing funds to get American citizens out of harm's way and to pay the debts that they have obligated both for cruises, for ships and for other things whereby they are taking people to Cyprus and other points of safety, so they can pay their bills.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, let me say that I applaud the gentleman. That is an important task, if you will. With that in mind, I will simply say, I hope that we will hear from the administration, and that this Congress will proceed in August to be able to provide direct humanitarian relief to Lebanon, and as well provide for the safe passage of those who are non-combatants innocent civilians trying to escape and to protect those structures which are not involved in this conflict.

With that, I would ask the leadership of this House to support H. Res. 945 and to bring it up immediately.

H. RES. 945

Whereas, since the commencement of hostilities, over 350 Lebanese civilians, one third of whom are children according to the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, and 17 Israeli civilians, have been killed;

Whereas vital infrastructure, including hospitals, power plants, bridges, roads, and food and milk factories in Lebanon have been destroyed;

Whereas over 600,000 people in Lebanon and hundreds of thousands of people in Israel have been displaced;

Whereas President George W. Bush has expressed great concern over the welfare of the people of Lebanon;

Whereas United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has called for an immediate cease-fire;

Whereas the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator has warned of a humanitarian disaster in Lebanon;

Whereas the Government of Lebanon has urgently appealed for an immediate cessation to hostilities; and

Whereas the international community has expressed support for a humanitarian corridor to Lebanon to be opened immediately to get desperately-needed humanitarian supplies to the suffering people of Lebanon: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls for the cessation of the targeting by any side of infrastructure vital to non-combatants, which also increases the likelihood of the loss of innocent civilian life;

(2) calls for a secure humanitarian corridor to be opened immediately via the seaports and airports of Lebanon to alleviate the unnecessary suffering of the people of Lebanon;

(3) calls for an immediate cease-fire in line with the urgent appeals of the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations Secretary General; and

(4) urges a comprehensive and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict to ensure that the peoples of the Middle East can live in peace, freedom, and prosperity.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation, hoping for debate on humanitarian aid directly to Lebanon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the amendment is agreed to. There was no objection.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5970, ESTATE TAX AND EXTENSION OF TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2006 AND H.R. 4, PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2006

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 966 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 966

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5970) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the unified credit against the estate tax to an exclusion equivalent of \$5,000,000, to repeal the sunset provision for the estate and generation-skipping taxes, and to extend expiring provisions, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4) to provide economic security for all Americans, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the

chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 966 is a closed rule providing for consideration of H.R. 5970. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate on H.R. 5970 in the House equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

It also waives all points of order against the consideration of H.R. 5970 and provides one motion to recommit H.R. 5970.

House Resolution 966 also provides for the consideration of H.R. 4 under a closed rule. It provides 1 hour of general debate on H.R. 4 in the House equally divided among and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of H.R. 4, and provides one motion to recommit.

This rule allows for consideration, Mr. Speaker, of two very important measures. The first deals with protecting the pensions of American workers. Mr. Speaker, the recent financial troubles and pension terminations of several large companies underscore the need for fundamental pension reform. The underlying bill is an agreement struck between the House and the Senate conferees on H.R. 2830, the Pension Security and Transparency Act.

The underlying bill will ensure that millions of hard-working Americans who rely on single and multi-employer pension benefits can continue to count on them. I would like to congratulate the majority leader, Mr. BOEHNER for his tireless efforts in bringing this conference report before the House today.

Mr. BOEHNER has worked on legislation to better protect the pension of workers for over 5 years now, and I commend him for his hard work on this issue. It is vital, Mr. Speaker, that we modernize current pension laws by strengthening worker's retirement security and reduce—

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I yield to the gentleman from North Dakota.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I heard the gentleman say now, as well during the debate on the martial law rule, that the rule brings forward the conference report on the pension bill.

Now, I was unaware that the pension bill had been reported out of the conference. And, indeed, I do not believe the conference report has ever been signed. If that is the case—

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would just tell my friend from North Dakota that that was the rule that we worked on. But there are three provisions. It was for the conference report, it was for the minimum wage bill, and it was for another bill. We are taking up the second two of those bills under that rule.

In other words, the first portion that was provided in the rule, while it is provided, is not applicable to what we are taking up tonight.

Mr. POMEROY. If gentleman would further yield. This would conclude my question. I will make a point on debate.

In my understanding of how Congress works, there is no conference report until the report has been signed by the conferees representing agreement between the House and the Senate.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time. Again, there was a conference report, my understanding was agreed by all but it was not signed. The gentleman is correct on that.

The underlying bill that we are taking up is that bill that was agreed by all parties on a bipartisan, bicameral basis. That is what this rule provides for.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that we modernize the current pension laws by strengthening the workers' retirement and reducing the prospect of future multi-billion dollar tax bailouts.

In recent years, we have seen participants mistakenly believe that their pension plans are well funded only to be surprised when their plan is abruptly terminated. This legislation is intended to end that.

The underlying bill encourages workers to increase their personal savings by permanently extending several provisions to enhance pension participation and retirement savings that are set to expire in 2010.

Mr. Speaker, without a comprehensive fix to our outdated Federal pension laws, more companies will default on their work and pension plans, and more will stop pension plans for workers entirely. Now is the time for Congress to act on this important legislation.

The other measure, Mr. Speaker, that this rule will allow for will continue our ongoing commitment to American workers and taxpayers by providing economic security, enacting permanent estate tax relief, and extending numerous tax provisions that have passed the House in the past with bipartisan support.

This bill includes extending the sales tax deductibility, research and development credits and higher education incentives.

In 2001, Congress enacted, in a bipartisan fashion, to gradually phase out the death tax and fully eliminate it by 2010. However, if Congress does not extend this relief, in 2011, small business owners and family farmers will once again be assessed the full death tax up to a maximum 2001 rate of 55 percent.

The House of Representatives has acted twice in this the 109th Congress to enact a permanent solution to this form of double taxation, but unfortunately, our efforts have been blocked by the other body. Today, the House of Representatives will once again act to help families suffering the loss of a loved one from having to worry about losing the family farm or business in order to pay the Internal Revenue Service.

The expectation this time is that the other body will take up the bill and pass the bill. This legislation will provide estate and gift tax relief to America's small business owners and family farmers. Specifically, the bill would increase the exemption amount and index it for inflation, and would lower the amount of taxation on estates.

Mr. Speaker, last year, I, along with 271 other Members of Congress, supported a measure that would permanently and fully eliminate the death tax. While permanent elimination of this tax is what I will continue to work with my colleagues on, this measure is a step, in my view, in the right direction.

With permanent tax relief from this tax, many farmers and business owners will have a sense of security that they need to plan for the financial future of their business or their farm for their family.

Another important provision in the underlying bill is an extension of the State and local sales tax deduction from the Federal income tax. My State of Washington is one of nine States that do not have a State income tax.

For nearly 20 years, residents of these States have been unfairly disadvantaged by the IRS code which allows for Federal tax deductions for State income taxes, but not States that have sales tax deductions.

In 2004, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and I fought to restore fairness to residents of States without an income tax by restoring the sales and local sales tax deduction.

I would like to thank the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. THOMAS, for his efforts to include a State and local sales tax extension, which allow every taxpayer that chooses to itemize deductions in the States with no income tax the opportunity to continue deducting sales tax from his or her Federal tax bill.

□ 1945

By passing the underlying legislation, we will be restoring fairness for

those who live, work, and raise families in those States. This will allow workers in Washington and others to keep more of their own money to spend and invest as they see fit.

While continuing to work to fight to make the State and local sales tax deduction permanent, this extension for 2 years will provide billions of dollars of relief to taxpayers in Washington and those other States, and I think it is a step in the right direction.

I am also pleased that this legislation creates a new 60 percent deduction for qualified timber capital gains through 2008. In my State of Washington, there are 8½ million acres of privately owned forests, and the forest products industry is the State's largest manufacturing sector. However, the current Tax Code puts our timber industry at a distinct disadvantage against international competition by subjecting corporate timber and forest product industries to a significantly higher income tax than their overseas competitors. Included in H.R. 5970 is a provision that lowers the timber tax and supports an industry that provides good jobs in many rural communities while strengthening its international competitiveness.

Another key provision of this bill extends the research and experimentation tax credit for 2 years. Technological innovation is vital to America's continued economic prosperity and research, and research and development is the lifeblood of innovation. However, research and development activities are expensive, and businesses generally cannot capture all of the returns on their investments. The Federal Government must continue to encourage private businesses to innovate by extending and enhancing tax incentives. The underlying bill does just that.

The underlying bill also extends several tax incentives to improve the affordability of higher education, including tax deferred education savings accounts and tax credits for post-secondary education. Specifically, it allows all taxpayers to deduct up to \$4,000 of higher education expenses, which will help more students go to college.

Mr. Speaker, with about one month left before school starts, teachers will begin preparing and purchasing classroom supplies. Unless Congress acts, an important above-the-line tax deduction that expired this year will not be available to teachers when they go back to school. This bill will help teachers contain the costs of out-of-pocket expenses like books, supplies, and computer equipment while allowing them to deduct \$250 from their Federal tax bill.

In an effort to encourage savings and stable retirement security, the underlying bill allows lower-income families that contribute to an individual retirement account and pension plans to continue receiving a Federal match in the form of an income tax credit for the first \$2,000 of annual contributions. This encourages families to save and plan for their own retirement.

There is no question that allowing families to keep more of their hard-earned money spurs economic growth. Earlier this month, revised budget estimates projected that a recent surge in tax revenue will help shrink the Federal deficit more than previously expected. Not acting would raise taxes on millions of workers and families. We must continue the policy to grow our economy and keep our tax bills from rising.

The House of Representatives has previously passed these tax provisions on a bipartisan basis, and last December the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2830, the Pension Protection Act, by a bipartisan vote of 294–132. I would encourage my colleagues to support House Resolution 966 and both underlying bills.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding me the customary 30 minutes. I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats have been saying again and again and again and again the American people want and deserve a clean up-or-down vote on raising the minimum wage, and this rule does not provide for such a vote. Minimum-wage workers want and deserve a clean up-or-down vote. A clear bipartisan majority of this House wants and deserves a clean up-or-down vote, not a cynical maneuver to provide political cover for certain vulnerable Republican Members, a maneuver that the majority knows full well will kill any chance of an increase in the minimum wage this year.

Let me say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, maybe you can fool your constituents in August, but let me tell you, the American people will not be fooled in November.

What the Republican leadership is presenting is a bill that clutters up the minimum-wage vote with, surprise, surprise, tax cuts for the wealthy. Actually, it isn't a surprise at all. The Republican answer to every problem is more tax cuts for the wealthy. Medicare prescription drugs? Tax cuts for the wealthy drug companies and HMOs. An energy bill? Tax cuts for the oil and gas industry, despite their record-breaking profits. And, now, an increase in the minimum wage with estate tax cuts for the wealthiest few attached.

The Republicans believe that low-wage workers don't deserve a raise unless Paris Hilton also gets a big tax cut. No wonder the American people are so sick and tired of politics as usual in Washington.

I would ask my Republican colleagues, why is it so impossible for you to do anything good for working families? Why does it cause you such pain and anguish and hand-wringing? Why can't you just do the right thing?

Congress has not raised the minimum wage since 1997. That is 9 years. During that same period of time, Congress has raised its own salary eight times. Now,

that is what I call out of touch. The congressional pay raise, just the amount of the pay raise in the last 9 years has been \$30,000, almost triple what a minimum-wage worker earns in an entire year. The average corporate CEO, who will benefit of course from the estate tax cut, earns more before lunchtime than a minimum-wage worker earns all year. A Republican staffer told the Columbus Ohio Dispatch: "Not too many people work at minimum wage anymore. I don't think it gets you anywhere politically."

Mr. Speaker, politics aren't the point. The point is to make sure that people who work hard every day in this country have enough money to feed their families and pay their rent and fill up their gas tanks.

Nearly 15 million Americans will benefit from a minimum-wage increase, 6.6 million directly and 8.3 million indirectly. Almost 60 percent of those workers are women, 40 percent are people of color, 35 percent of them are their family's sole wage earners. You want to talk about family values, about helping children? Just raise the minimum wage.

Even worse, Mr. Speaker, the massive estate tax cut being tacked onto this bill will actually harm those hardworking families by adding millions of dollars to the national debt. The children of today's minimum-wage worker will have to pay that debt. They will have to deal with increased interest rates; they will have to deal with China and other countries controlling the debt of this country. They will have to deal with the cuts in education and health care. It is outrageous, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, this rule makes in order a pension bill that not only misses an important opportunity to deal with this country's retirement security crisis; it also will lead to benefit cuts for millions of American workers.

And let me again clarify it for the record so there is no mistake: this is not a conference report that we are voting on here tonight. I want to make it clear, because there is some misunderstanding. This is not the result of the conference negotiations that we have this bill before us tonight.

The pension bill fails to encourage companies to keep offering traditional pensions to their workers, it fails companies from using bankruptcy to dump worker pension plans, and it fails to stop companies from awarding lavish retirement compensation packages to executives at the same time they cut workers' benefits.

I can't say it any more plainly, Mr. Speaker, the priorities of this Republican leadership are not the priorities of the American people. What the American people want and what they deserve is a clean up-or-down vote on increasing the minimum wage. We have voted on this issue in various procedural votes over and over and over and over. We want a clean vote. We want this to become the law of the

land. We want to make sure that low-income wage earners get the raise that they deserve so they can get out of poverty. And what the American people also want and deserve is a pension bill that protects them. They won't be getting any of that today, Mr. Speaker, so I urge my colleagues to reject this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the Republican conference Chair, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE).

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman, my friend, for yielding.

The agreement we have reached at long last tonight will benefit millions of hardworking Americans. This is a landmark achievement. We have attained unprecedented unity, and I am grateful for the hard work of the leadership and for our Members' commitment to getting this done for America.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle are already calling this political, but they are wrong. It is another example of House Republicans getting things done for the American people. The bill before us tonight will raise the minimum wage more than \$2, to \$7.25 an hour, a 41 percent increase, a provision that I am very proud to support.

Ohio workers where I live deserve a raise, and tonight that is what we are giving them, and we are doing it in a way that won't stifle job creation; but more importantly, we are doing it in a way that will be able to pass and become law. A clean up-or-down vote would never get through the Senate, the other body, and would never become law.

This legislation will also benefit family businesses by burying the death tax for good. Because of this crippling tax that has been on our books for so long, more than 70 percent of family businesses and family farms don't even make it through the second generation, and 87 percent don't even make it to the third. The death tax relief included in this bill will protect these businesses and allow them to continue to create jobs for hardworking Americans.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will also support our Nation's teachers. Teachers often contribute more than their time and talent to educate our students, frequently dipping into their own pockets to provide essential classroom supplies. The Apples for Teachers provision which I introduced years ago is expiring, but today we will extend it and these expenses will continue to be tax deductible.

Mr. Speaker, this is a vote for our teachers, for our families, for our small businesses, for our farmers, and for all hardworking Americans. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the previous speaker, give me a break. The Republicans know

that this is dead on arrival when it goes to the Senate. They know that there will be no increase in the minimum wage if this is the combination that goes before the United States Senate. They had to be dragged kicking and screaming here. The only reason why we are here right now is because the American people are demanding action on this issue, and they are trying to find political cover. This is beyond cynical. This is disgraceful what they are doing here on the House floor today.

Mr. Speaker I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, a distinguished member of the Rules Committee (Ms. MATSUI).

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, before we begin this debate, I urge each Member to ask themselves, why did you first seek election to this House? It is my hope that it is similar to my reason: to represent my hometown, to craft laws and policies that will serve the best interests of the families and businesses of that community, and to ensure that the world we leave behind is better than the world you and I inherited. Of late, I think Congress has forgotten that.

When I compare the laundry list of items important to my constituents and the American people to what Congress is doing, a disconnect is apparent. An overwhelming majority of Americans think it is long past due to increase the minimum wage. Over the past 6 years, this Congress has done little, if anything, to help those earning the minimum wage and the families who depend on them.

The buying power of the minimum wage is now at its lowest point in 57 years. At the same time, the cost of key necessities like health care, education, and gas have been rising faster than inflation. Yet during the past 8 years, Members of Congress have raised their own pay seven times by nearly \$30,000. In those same years, minimum-wage workers have not gotten a single raise. They continue to earn an average of \$10,700 a year.

Raising the minimum wage is a real tangible policy decision to significantly help 7.5 million Americans who this Congress has virtually ignored. We can make this choice only by allowing an up-or-down vote on Congressman MILLER's bipartisan bill. This bill would gradually raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour.

□ 2000

Since February, nearly 200 Members have signed the petition that would force and up-or-down vote on this measure, and that is what we should have today.

The only reason we have not had a vote on it is because of the Republican leadership. They resisted the will of the American people and a bipartisan coalition of Members.

And now that the minimum wage increase will finally be debated by the House, it has once again been loaded down with poison pills. If the Republican leadership really cared about raising the minimum wage, they would not have waited until the eleventh hour before the House leaves for recess. This is a transparent election-year ploy. I am confident the American people will see it for what it is.

When a party holds three votes to roll back the estate tax, but refuses to allow a clean vote on the minimum wage, it is clear where its priorities are.

While raising the minimum wage will help millions of Americans, the estate measure will primarily benefit just 7,500 families.

Looking at the majority's record, we should not be surprised.

There is the series of tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest among us, the massively flawed Medicare prescription drug benefit and subsidies for oil and gas companies. But for those in the middle class and working families, there is not much to talk about, nothing to help get access to decent health care or build on the promise of stem cell research, or lower the price of gas or make college more affordable. At the end of today, the majority certainly cannot claim to have made a good faith effort to raise the minimum wage.

And that is truly a shame, because you have squandered an opportunity to help the constituents that need your help the most.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), my colleague on the Rules Committee.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and gentleman from Washington for yielding me time, and I rise today in strong support of the rule and the underlying legislation.

First, I would like to thank our leadership for having the foresight and leadership to bring this excellent compromise before the House. I am delighted to have been part of the 48 Republicans that have pushed through letters and meetings and other methods to ask our leadership to bring a vote on the minimum wage to this floor.

I just heard a minute ago these words, "just raise the minimum wage," well, guess what. That is what this bill does.

Let me be clear, with the passage of this legislation, we will raise the minimum wage over the next 3 years to \$7.25. This is real relief for those workers who are trying to support a family on a minimum wage job, bringing it closer to a true living wage. I have supported raising the minimum wage for years, and I am glad to see that on this day this vote is coming to the floor.

I am also pleased that we are including death tax relief in this measure.

Unlike some of my colleagues, I see this tax relief and minimum wage bill as complementary. The death tax is a punitive measure that unfairly burdens small business owners and farmers. The sustaining of small businesses by keeping their vital assets will allow those making the minimum wage to continue working and hopefully provide greater resources to bring them above the minimum wage.

This is a jobs bill, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this step forward for workers and the businesses that employ them.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

All we want is a clean up-or-down vote on the minimum wage. We want this to become law. We do not want to make a political statement. This is not about a press release.

Why do we have to bog the minimum wage bill down with language to benefit the heirs of the Wal-Mart family, the Mars family? Or give Paris Hilton another tax cut? Why can we not just do what is right, which is to give low-wage income earners in this country the raise that they deserve?

We are tired of the political posturing. We want action.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, if my colleague that just spoke on the other side of the aisle cared about the minimum wage, she would have signed the discharge petition so we could have had an up-or-down vote on the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, if ever the American people needed evidence that the Republican Congress is putting politics before what is good for the American people, this is it. This is a cynical gimmick. It is designed to kill any increase in the minimum wage. It is an excuse for vulnerable Republicans to go home this August claiming they cast a vote in support of raising the minimum wage without actually impacting the life of a single family earning it.

Mr. Speaker, why must we make this debate about an estate tax that the country cannot afford, one which would benefit 7,500 families nationwide? Only 7,500 families.

What we want and what we need is an economy that produces a rising living standard for most American families, and right now, with rising interest rates, high gas prices, skyrocketing health care costs and a slowing housing market, it makes no sense whatsoever for the Congress to tether a modest increase in the minimum wage to billions of dollars in an estate tax cut for those who do not need them.

This measure shows contempt for the public interest, especially when the minimum wage has not been raised since 1997, when its purchasing power stands at its lowest in a half century.

Meanwhile, the Congress has voted to increase its own pay nine times since 1997. I cannot remember a single time

this body's attached its own pay increase to controversial legislation that the other party rejects outright, and I suspect it is not an accident.

For Democrats, this is simple. If this Congress can get a raise, the American people ought to be able to get one as well, and we should be able to vote on that with a clear up-or-down vote, no attachments, no gimmicks. Oppose this rule.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER).

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and of the underlying tax bill.

Mr. Speaker, if I was listening to this debate at home, I would think that we were discussing something super controversial. I would wonder if we were putting a nuclear waste site on a school playground or something to that effect. Well, nothing could be further from the truth. A lot of the criticism we are hearing today is election-year demagoguery. Here is some straight talk.

This legislation increases the minimum wage, expands the deductions for college tuition and repeals the death tax for most family-owned small businesses. That is it. That is the heart of this legislation, and let me be real specific.

The minimum wage will go from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour. College tuition will be expanded, and you can deduct up to \$4,000 per year. The death tax will be repealed for those people with estates of \$5 million or less. After that, it will be taxed at 15 percent.

Now, most of the controversy, supposed controversy, is addressed towards this minimum wage increase being linked to the death tax repeal for most people. Now, why do we do that? Seventy percent of all new jobs in this country are created by small business people. If we are going to increase the minimum wage, we do not want these employees to be laid off. We do not want the small businessman to be forced with an increased payroll to have no choice but to lay folks off.

We want, on the other hand, these small businesses to be successful and continue to operate. It always mystifies me why some people on the other side pretend to love jobs, yet they hate the employers who provide these jobs.

Now, how does this help? One-third of family-owned small businesses are forced to liquidate because of the death tax. We want, on the other hand, these businesses to continue to operate from one generation to the next. This is the current law if we do nothing.

In the year 2010, the death tax will be zero. In the year 2011, it will go back up to a 55 percent tax rate, 55 percent, even though the money has been taxed once at the income level. Unfortunately, the only family-owned business in America that knows for sure that

their patriarch will die in 2010 is the Sopranos.

Now, I have been listening to some other comments the other side has made. They said that we are fooling our constituents; that these are just tax cuts for the wealthy like Paris Hilton; that we must be in the hip pocket of the special interests. Well, let me tell you what they did not say. Forty-three Democrats voted for this same exact death tax repeal. Are those Democrats fooling their constituents? Are they only caring about tax cuts for Paris Hilton? Are they in the hip pocket of special interests? Or are they a few people that decided to stand up to the liberal leadership and say I am an American first and I want to do what is best for small businesspeople?

We need less demagoguery, less political shenanigans, less pessimism, and what we need is more straight talk, more commonsense and more optimism.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" for the rule and "yes" for the bill.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let us have a little straight talk. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are tying the minimum wage to all these special tax breaks and tax breaks for Paris Hilton absolutely. They are doing this for one reason, because they know it will be dead on arrival in the Senate. That is cynical, and this is politics at its worst.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the distinguished ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee.

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I have been in this place a long time, but I do not remember even this close to an election seeing the type of hypocrisy that we see today.

There is only one ship that they would like to see get on the waters, and that is the estate tax relief, and it is only going to provide relief for a fraction of 1 percent, of some 7,500 individuals in the country. That is the wealthiest of the wealthy. Most Americans cannot even dream about getting to the status that they are going to be liable for taxes, and why would they want this? They want this because if you want campaign contributions, you go where the money is, and believe me, this is the cream of the crop of the money that we have in the United States of America.

They know the bill stinks to high heaven. That is why it is not on its own two feet. If this were a great thing for America and democracy, one, we would not wait until midnight to talk about it; and two, we would be so proud of it. The Star Spangled Banner would be here, the lights would be shining and we would talk about estate tax relief.

But it stinks so heavy, they try to sweeten it up by putting other tax bills on it. There must be around 40 extend-

ers here that do good work, and so they say if you want the extenders, you got to buy this stinking rule, but that is not enough. Whatever you do for the corporations or the rich folks, but why hold millions of Americans that cannot get an increase in minimum wage, why would you put them on top of this? Why would you hold them hostage?

And whether or not the bill passes in the other House, do we not have any shame? Are not all of these issues important enough for this august body to take them up one by one?

It is almost like having a child talk about I want so badly to increase the minimum wage for them, and then you put these concrete shoes on them, as you throw them into the ocean alone and not being able to swim.

If you care about poor folks, act like it. Give them a day by themselves. Do not mix their problems up with the richest of the rich of this country. Hypocrisy, I have now seen it all.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my colleague from Washington (Mr. REICHERT).

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend and fellow Washingtonian for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and the underlying bill, specifically H.R. 5970. This legislation includes some tax provisions that are very important to Washington State, including an extension of the State and local sales tax deduction.

The Internal Revenue Code has long allowed residents of States that have an income tax to deduct their income tax on their Federal return. However, for too long, the code penalized residents of States like mine, Washington State, which uses the sales tax as its revenue base. I am pleased that the authors of this bill have included an extension of the deductibility of State and local sales tax.

Additionally, the timber tax provision is of great importance to companies like Weyerhaeuser in Washington State.

I also rise to express my strong support for the provision in this bill which extends the research and development tax credit, which is so important to our Nation's high-tech industry and to all companies that innovate, companies in my district like Microsoft and Ramgen, which is a company conducting alternative energy research and creating cutting edge technology and products, which in turn creates jobs.

As we all know, in the 21st century the United States is competing in a global economic environment. We as a Congress must take all reasonable steps to enable American businesses to compete. Also, the kind of jobs produced in the research-driven economy are often high-paying jobs. Consumers are the beneficiaries of new and improved products.

While I support legislation to make this credit permanent, short of that, I

applaud the authors of this bill for extending the credit for 2 years.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 2015

Mr. LEVIN. They say legislation is like making sausages. You have heard that. This legislation is worse, because as far as I know, sausages do not have poison pills in them. This legislation does.

It links action to help struggling families, working families with tax breaks for the very wealthy. And why the linkage? It is clear. Because the estate tax provisions can't pass on their own.

Secondly, contrary to what has been said here, a clean bill on minimum wages would be passed by the House and Senate; but when you link it, it won't happen. And that is what the majority party in this House wants, no increase in minimum wages.

And just let us think about fiscal responsibility. The estate tax change, and these are the estimates. You bring this up at the last minute, it is a little hard to have exact dollar estimates, but here they are. Over 10 years the estate tax change would cost \$270 billion, and over a full 10 years, when fully into effect, \$700 billion.

And, look, what would happen is not only would it be \$10 million joint filers would have no estate tax, but a major break for estates between \$5 million and \$25 million, \$10 million and \$50 million for joint filers, and those above that; they still get a break. So what this does is eat up hundreds of billions of dollars, and not for family farmers and not for small businesses. Ninety-nine percent of the estates would be exempted under present law.

No, this is for the very, very wealthy. But I say this: the desperate Republicans are not going to be saved by these maneuvers. The public, fellow and sister Republicans, will not be fooled by your antics this night.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The gentleman from Washington has 11 minutes and the gentleman from Massachusetts has 13½ minutes.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY).

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise to oppose this rule. It is, on its very face, absurd.

The bills this rule would allow to the floor include the obscene proposition

that Congress must allow a massive tax break for the wealthiest few multimillionaire families in this country in order to get an increase in the \$5.15 per hour minimum wage paid to the lowest-income workers in this country.

The rule also allows to the floor a pension bill which has been falsely labeled as the conference report between the House and the Senate. Twenty million Americans in the workforce today have pensions. They are counting on a pension check to sustain them in old age, yet month after month of non-transparent legislative wheeling and dealing and the pension bill now in conference committee is stuck.

It has been an ugly process. The debate has been hot. The games played have been silly, and the differences have been personal and intense. And that is just within the Republican Party. Let me read to you from today's edition of CQ a description of last night's conference committee action:

"Anger Erupts As House GOP Snubs Pension Vote: After days of tense negotiation over pension legislation, tempers flared Thursday night when House Republicans boycotted a vote on a conference report proposal, provoking the scorn of their Senate counterparts and leaving the bill in jeopardy."

"I wonder why you wouldn't have guts enough to come forward and vote," said an emotional Senator."

Have you ever seen such foolishness? The fate of workers' pensions hangs in the balance and our House Republicans stage a walkout on the conference and refuse even to vote. They didn't vote "yes"; they didn't vote "no." Basically, they thumbed their nose at America's workers and they thumbed their noses at the United States Senate.

And tonight they bring a new bill on pensions, a bill never voted on in the House, never voted on in the Senate, never seen any legislative committee markup, and they have the brazen gall to call it the conference report.

Our workers counting on their pensions deserve so much better than this rancorous game of legislative brinksmanship. Some may be inclined to write this whole evening off as the frantic egocentric last throes of a powerful chairman about to lose his power in retirement. But that is no justification for this nonsense.

My colleagues, let the games stop and stop right now. Reject this rule and get that conference committee on pensions back to work and let's pass a minimum wage for the lowest paid workers without being held to ransom in giving massive tax relief to the wealthiest multi-millionaire families in this country.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is written that ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

The truth is that this bill is not about raising the minimum wage; it is really about an inheritance tax break of around \$800 billion for the wealthiest. It is not about those who work at \$5.15 an hour, who work through Easter, work through Thanksgiving, work through Christmas, and at the end of the year make \$10,712. It is not really about them. It is not about the least, the last, and the lost. It is about the well-off, the well-heeled, and the well-to-do.

In this country, one out of every 110 persons is a millionaire. In this country, we spend \$177 million per day on the war, yet we haven't raised the minimum wage since 1997. It is not time to raise it; it is past time to raise it. And it is time to do it without tagging it to an inheritance tax break for the wealthiest.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, what a fraud, what a sham. I am embarrassed to be part of a House where they spring on us a bill that neither the American people nor few of my colleagues have had a chance to review.

American workers and their families have been waiting 9 long years for an increase in the minimum wage. I represent those people. Maybe you don't. The real inflation-adjusted value of the minimum wage is at its lowest point in 50 years.

Democrats have been desperately trying for years to bring an increase in the minimum wage to the floor, but the Republican leadership has sought to block it at every turn. While working families have seen their wages fall, the U.S. Congress has received nine wage raises.

Mr. Speaker, as a result, this bill will not become law and, hence, we will not help any of the almost 15 million minimum-wage earners in the United States. What a fraud. Shame on us.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. This rule and the underlying bill are the kind of cynical ploy that unfortunately make Americans lose faith in their government.

Americans know that Democrats have pushed for years to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25, a wage that has not been raised since 1996. Yet in the last 10 years, the Republican leadership has never allowed an up-or-down vote on that simple proposition, and tonight they still don't have the guts to do it.

Here is what they say to the American people: in order for American families who work at the minimum wage and earn \$10,000 a year to get a small wage increase, you have got to give the 7,500 American families with estates over \$7 million a big tax break.

Now, who are the losers tonight? Well, the big losers are everybody else.

If you earn more than \$10,000 a year, but you don't come from one of the 7,500 families with \$7 million estates, you're a loser. And that is most of America. Why are you a loser? Because you are going to be paying billions of dollars on the interest by this additional borrowing.

And here is the double standard: every year since 1996, this Republican leadership has had an up-or-down vote on congressional pay raises. They have never held their pay raise hostage to another piece of legislation. But when it comes to increasing the wages for working Americans, families earning \$10,000 a year, oh, they are different from us Members of Congress. When it comes to giving them a pay raise, we are going to hold it hostage. We are going to hold it hostage to giving 7,500 American families with \$7 million estates a tax break.

That is unconscionable, it is shameful, and the American people understand what is going on. The game is up. Shame on the Republican leadership.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, you have to ask why Members of the U.S. Congress would hold working families ransom for a very modest increase in the minimum wage after so much time has passed. Why would Members of Congress do that? How could they possibly deny people who work in our nursing homes and care for our families, people who work cleaning up our schools, people who work laboring under the hot sun on various sites, how could Members of the U.S. Congress hold them hostage? To get what their special interests, the wealthiest among us, what they want: these million dollar tax breaks.

How could they possibly do that? Well, the best explanation I can come up with is that those same Members who are holding these working families hostage tonight have had over \$30,000 pay raises in the last several years themselves. Eight times they have received pay raises. Eight times their families have been well clothed and well fed. Eight times they have gone on trips on airplanes. Eight times they have had their health care needs met without worrying how they are going to pay for their kids' appendectomy. They are conditioned to be able to allow their families, the working families of this country, to tell them to go fish.

It is a moral outrage to tell the working families of this country tonight, in the darkness of night, where evil is traditionally done in human affairs, that you can tell these families that they can just go fish and not get a tiny little raise in the minimum wage unless these, the well-heeled, the special interests, those who have influ-

ence in here get their piece of the action.

Well, let me tell you, there is something in the Good Book that says by their acts ye shall know them. And by your votes you shall know them. There is a group here in Congress that thinks there is only a special group that counts in this country, and that our genius is only the wealthy.

We are the group who believes that working people are just as entitled to the respect of this Congress as those who are well off. Reject this rule and pass the minimum wage as we should.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Washington has 11 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Massachusetts has 4½ minutes.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I continue to reserve my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I thank the gentleman for his courtesy.

I heard my friend from Puget Sound in Washington talk about how this was a good deal. You have heard speaker after speaker after speaker talk about how this is a sham, that it is not a direct vote to be able to deal with the minimum wage; but it is worse than that, because those people in Puget Sound who are tipped employees, who work for the minimum wage are going to see a \$2.48 an hour cut under the Republican bill intent.

In the State of Oregon, where we have indexed the minimum wage, our people are going to see a \$1.75 an hour reduction. The Republican bill cuts the wages of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of workers in the States of Alaska, California, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington by preempting the State minimum-wage laws where a State has disallowed the employer tip tax credit.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, before I yield time to my friend from Tennessee, I would remind my friend from Oregon that the minimum wage in Washington State is, if not the highest, is the second highest in the country. It is \$7.63.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

□ 2030

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I had no intention of speaking, but I do think that some balance and reason needs to set in here. I hate to see people I respect on the other side of the aisle say things that have really dumbed down this entire debate because I will tell you what this rule and the underlying legislation actually represents. It represents a responsible way for us to address real problems in this economy when wages haven't gone up from the bottom in 9 years, with a strong economy.

I went to my conference this week, and I said to our conference that cor-

porate leaders haven't been responsible enough and the economy is strong. And I will tell you one reason it's strong is because our tax policy has been good for America and the economy is growing. Just this week in my home city, record construction, strong economy, low unemployment. And so this is something we want to address.

The other side says all the time, Well, you run this place. You've got majorities in the House and the Senate. And I want to remind them that we do. And if we didn't want to do this, we wouldn't do it. But we are doing it this way because this is the better way to do it. Because the small businesspeople and the family farmers need certainty in terms of this estate tax. We eliminated it, but it comes back. It is an onerous tax, it is an unfair tax, and when you raise wages, which is a fixed cost in business, you have to compensate that with smart business investments through tax policy.

Our tax policy has been good for America. Our economic policy is good for America. And frankly this wage increase is a savvy way to put it all together and make this medicine for America go down smooth and keep our economy strong. Because this will force some fixed costs up in small business and you can't just throw it on them without some people losing their jobs, and this is a fair and responsible way to do it.

I know why you are so mad and why you say things you don't really mean, because you have seen us really outfox you on this issue tonight. That is what we are doing today, is bringing a very crafty, smart, good-for-America, good-for-the-economy package and still allow the minimum wage to go up.

I hope it passes this body, the other body, because it is going to be good for America in the aggregate, not individual pieces. Right now would be an excellent time to actually put this package forward together, and I believe the country will be much better off.

I am proud of this majority that we figured out the best way to do this and do it right now. It is an excellent time. I thank our leadership for bringing this to the floor tonight. And it is not in the middle of the night. As a matter of fact, it is broad daylight here in Washington, and it is going to be that way through this entire debate across most of America.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Let me say to my friend from Tennessee, I mean every word I say.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 15 seconds to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. With all due respect to my good friend from the State of Washington, what I said was because your bill intends to take away the tip credit provisions, you are going to cut the minimum wage for thousands and thousands and thousands of Washington employees who are minimum wage who, because of the tip credit provision, you are going to cut it \$1.75 an

hour immediately upon effect. And that is wrong.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 3¼ minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. This is a sham procedure. A 1,000-page bill. No time to read it. It is an insulting bill. In order to provide a tiny increase in the minimum wage, we have to give billions of dollars of tax cuts to those who are inheriting from families with over a \$7 million estate.

But there is a special hypocrisy here. You see, this minimum-wage bill has a poison pill. They know it won't pass the Senate. There is only one pay-increase bill that is supposed to become law. That is the one that includes our pay raise. Our pay raise went through on a clean bill. They knew it would pass the Senate. The minimum-wage increase goes with a poison pill that is dead on arrival in the Senate. We know which pay raise they want, and which pay raise they don't want.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to our distinguished Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his leadership on these very important issues before us that affect the lives of America's working families, the minimum wage, the pension bill, that are part of this rule. I also thank him for meaning what he says on the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us this evening is an insult to the intelligence of the American people. It is also an insult to the over 7 million Americans who depend on an increase in the minimum wage to live from paycheck to paycheck. It is a political stunt. It isn't a sincere effort to give an increase in the minimum wage. Republicans boast that they have held out for 9 years to keep the minimum wage at \$5.15 an hour. That is their proud boast. Don't take it from me. Look at the public record. And so for them to come to this floor to try to give the illusion that they are sincerely trying to raise the minimum wage when they know that this bill is dead on arrival at the United States Senate is, again, an insult to the intelligence of the American people and the hard work of the American people as well.

Just think of what it is to have a bill that says to minimum-wage workers, we'll raise your minimum wage, but only if we can give an estate tax cut to the 7,500 wealthiest families in America. This isn't about wealth. This is about super, superwealth. The only way you will get an increase in the minimum wage is if they can get a tax cut.

If there has ever been a values debate on the floor of the Congress, this certainly must be it. This should be part

of the values agenda of Congress, to reward work, to pay a decent wage to people so that they can raise their families.

Democrats have a better idea. In our new direction for America, a new direction for all Americans, not just the privileged few, we make raising the minimum wage a key part of that. In addition to that, we also repeal what the Republicans have in place, which is an incentive for companies to send jobs overseas.

But back to the minimum wage. A working family, two wage-earners working full time making \$5.15 an hour bring home the sum total of \$20,000 a year. They are below the poverty line. I almost hope that no children are listening to this tonight, because we tell children about the work ethic, that it is important to work hard, it is important in their lives, it is important to our country's competitiveness, it is an important strength, that the middle class is a part of our democracy in our country and that the middle class must grow and be expanded instead of having a lid on what some people can aspire to in our country.

Our better idea also includes what the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) offered a few weeks ago on the floor of the House. He wasn't allowed to put it in motion here, they wouldn't even allow it to be heard, but we insisted on some of the debate, anyway. And that was a cut in the estate tax that affected 99.7 percent of all Americans who file the estate tax; 99.7 percent of all filers. This .3 percent, the 7,500 wealthiest families in America, must have done something quite wonderful for the Republicans that they wouldn't even allow that to be debated on the floor and that they hook it on to this increase in the minimum wage.

Again, it is a political ploy. It's a joke. It's a hoax. It's a sham. It doesn't even rise to the level of that, so low is it in its intention.

A couple of times in the past couple of months, I have quoted from the latest papal encyclical, "God is Love." It was released April 2006 by Pope Benedict. I am just drawn to it all of the time because it talks about justice, and it talks about justice in a way that affects elected officials.

In this encyclical, Pope Benedict says: "St. Augustine wrote, 'A state which is not governed according to justice would be just a bunch of thieves.'" That is a pope quoting a saint. A saint: "A state which is not governed according to justice would be just a bunch of thieves."

The Pope goes on to write, and in this part of the encyclical he is talking about the responsibility of elected officials and those responsible for governing, he says, "How do you define justice? What is justice?" He warns of the danger, this is the Pope, warns of the danger of the ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests. The dazzling effect of power and special interests and the ethical blindness that that causes.

Does that sound familiar, my colleagues? Can you relate to that in this body? Is that not at work here tonight? One of our colleagues said, this is about truth. I think many of our colleagues have. Yes, this is a moment of truth. With all of these votes of this kind, we define ourselves as a Congress. We define ourselves as a country. When the American people listen in to this debate, we are either relevant to their lives or we are not. And I think no place, well, the competition for this honor is so keen that it is hard to tell which is the worst piece of legislation the Republicans have brought to the floor, but this certainly ranks right up there, to prove how out of touch the Republicans are with the American people, how out of touch they are with people, the middle class, who are sweating it out this summer in more ways than one.

Sweating out the price of gasoline at the pump, a bill born of corruption in this body.

Seniors sweating it out in terms of paying for prescription drugs at the pharmacy where middle-income seniors are paying more for their prescription drugs.

Sweating it out in terms of the college tuition that they are going to have to paste together to send their children to college while the Republicans pass legislation that gives tax breaks to the 7,500 wealthiest families in America and freezes Pell Grants and also cuts billions of dollars out of the student loan program. Paycheck to paycheck, trying to make ends meet, to make the future better for their children. But this Congress proves over and over again it has no relationship to that challenge. None.

And so I hope my colleagues in this moment of truth will remember the words of His Holiness when he quoted a saint, St. Augustine, who many years ago said: "Unless government promotes justice, you're just a bunch of thieves." I can't think of a more appropriate analogy than that for what is happening here today. We are robbing the future of America's families who are struggling for a better future for their children in order to give a tax cut of \$800 billion. Not only is this a burden to these low-income families; they are saying to them, your children and future generations and everyone alive and paying taxes today will be paying for \$800 billion added to our national debt.

Values? Foisting that onto our children and onto the American taxpayer. Values? Putting a sham bill together to give political cover for the cowards who won't stand up and bring a clean bill to this floor to see where the choice would be? I have no doubt that there are some right-thinking Republicans who would support a clean increase in the minimum wage. But we will soon find out when the motion to recommit is brought to the floor later this evening which will have a clean increase in the minimum wage and will also have the extenders.

□ 2045

Interesting about the extenders. The Republicans are using them as an excuse to get votes for their political ploy they have here tonight. They have been expired for 6 months. They have needed to be extended for 6 months. But the Republicans always want to wheel them out so they can attract votes to, as Mr. RANGEL called, their stinkeroo of a bill.

But, my colleagues, this is deadly serious. We are here to get the job done for the American people. We are not here to give money, a transfer of wealth, a transfer of wealth, to the wealthiest people in America. And who pays the price? The middle class. Well, if we are going to survive as a democracy, a healthy democracy which is a model to the world, it is about time we understood that central to that democracy is a thriving, expanding middle class whose job we are here to do. Let us have tax cuts for them, not for the wealthiest people in the country and send the tax bill to the middle class.

Let us remember the words of His Holiness, "promote justice." Oppose this rule. Oppose this bill. And let us get serious about helping the American people.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, people in this country are tired of politics as usual, and what is before us today is politics as usual. It is cynical and it is wrong. This is a press release. This is a political stunt. My friends on the other side of the aisle know that there will be no minimum wage increase when you tie it to tax cuts for Paris Hilton. It is just not going to happen. The Senate has already said that this is going nowhere. You know that.

To my Republican friends who have taken to the floor today to say that they support the minimum wage, to the 20 Republicans who signed a letter to their leader asking that we bring the minimum wage to the floor, let me say that it is not enough to go through the motions. If you really believe that we should have an increase in the minimum wage, which has been stuck at \$5.15 for 9 years, then you need to demand action. And what we are doing today is not demanding action.

Mr. Speaker, during those 9 years since we last raised the minimum wage, this Congress has given itself eight pay raises. There is something fundamentally wrong when we can give ourselves pay raise after pay raise, but we cannot raise the minimum wage for those who are making \$5.15 an hour. These families work hard. They are living in poverty.

Mr. Speaker, do the right thing. Let us have a clean up-or-down vote on the minimum wage. Vote against this rule.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this rule provides for consideration of two very important

bills. One bill is a pension reform bill that has been worked on for over 5 years on a bipartisan, bicameral basis. It is a very important piece of legislation and it needs to pass. The other bill is a bill that has two very important provisions: tax provisions dealing with the death tax and raising the minimum wage.

And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I am curious by hearing the debate. I kept hearing on the other side of the aisle their talking about "just give us an up-or-down vote." Well, I think we are sent here by our constituents to do more than vote. We are here to enact legislation. And the expectation, the expectation is that the second dealing with the tax provisions and the minimum wage will pass not only this body, but will pass the other body and become law.

I think that is much, much better service to our constituents rather than just saying give us a vote up or down and knowing that it may not pass both bodies. This will pass both bodies.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on that, I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 459) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 459

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That, in consonance with section 132(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Friday, July 28, 2006, or Saturday, July 29, 2006, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, September 6, 2006, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Thursday, August 3, 2006, through Monday, August 7, 2006, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Tuesday, September 5, 2006, or such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, or their respective designees, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House and the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the House and the Senate, respectively, to reassemble at such place and time as they may designate if, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order: adoption of H. Res. 966, by the yeas and nays; adoption of H. Con. Res. 459, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The next electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5970, ESTATE TAX AND EXTENSION OF TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2006 AND H.R. 4, PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the vote on adoption of House Resolution 966, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 217, nays 194, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 419]

YEAS—217

Aderholt	Brown (SC)	Diaz-Balart, L.
Akin	Brown-Waite,	Diaz-Balart, M.
Alexander	Ginny	Doolittle
Bachus	Burgess	Drake
Baker	Burton (IN)	Dreier
Barrett (SC)	Calvert	Duncan
Bartlett (MD)	Camp (MI)	Ehlers
Barton (TX)	Campbell (CA)	Emerson
Bass	Cannon	English (PA)
Beauprez	Cantor	Everett
Biggart	Capito	Feeney
Blibray	Carter	Ferguson
Bishop (UT)	Castle	Fitzpatrick (PA)
Blackburn	Chabot	Flake
Blunt	Chocola	Foley
Boehner	Cole (OK)	Forbes
Bonilla	Conaway	Fortenberry
Bonner	Crenshaw	Fossella
Bono	Cubin	Fox
Boozman	Culberson	Franks (AZ)
Boustany	Davis (KY)	Frelinghuysen
Bradley (NH)	Davis, Tom	Galleghy
Brady (TX)	Dent	Garrett (NJ)